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THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER

VOLUME XIV No. 5

MAY 1945

J. VINCENT NORDGREN

Editor

PAUL E. BIERSTEDT

C. E. LINDER

PAUL M. LINDBERG

HERMAN G. NELSON

Editorial

Advisory Committee

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The Church School Teacher

VOL. XVI MAY 1945 No. 5

"That It May Be Well . . ."

By A. C. STRENG

"Oh that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" Deut. 5. 29.

THUS we read the almost begging, longing lament of Almighty God, on the mountain of fire, desiring to make a perpetual, decisive covenant with His very own people.

Is it well with the child . . . *your* child? My son! My daughter! Would God that I might die for thee . . . die for thee on the battlefield . . . die for thee to redeem thee from a life of sin! Are not such words painfully and agonizingly prayed and uttered today by parents . . . today when it may be too late, when children are no longer under their care, but far away at camp, in ships, or on distant shore?

But for those who are still at home, for those with whom we are still permitted to associate day in and day out, much more can and must be done if our future prayers are—but by the grace of God—to be more than wishful thinking, if our consciences are to find peace in days to come.

Only five million of the thirty-two million children of school age in America are receiving religious instruction. At last more leaders are becoming aroused about the second and third "generation of spiritual illiterates" that are growing up in our nation, about the

neglect of the child which is called the "great sin" of the Protestant churches. Dr. Frederick Eby, a wise and matured scholar of the history and philosophy of education, recently said in an address to public school people: "The greatest problem facing American education today is religion: and it is an insoluble problem." The American principle of separation of church and state will hardly permit Christianity to be adequately taught in a released-time program. The spiritual blindness of many leaders and the history of the Lutheran Church in America do not augur too well for a commonly used parochial school program. Dr. Eby looks toward the Christion home as the only effective agency which may in the future be induced to inspire American children with their Christian heritage.

That the religious home may thus be effectively used, has its illustrations in Old and New Testament times, in the days of Martin Luther, and in a multitude of pious homes since that day; that is why the great Reformer addressed his *Small Catechism* to the "head of the family." In large part it is a question as to whether Christian parents really love children and whether Christian consciences can be aroused to their first duty. Too long have parents tried to push the most important duties to their children off on some one else or on some other agency. Dr. Regina W. Wiemann has made the wise but accusing statement: "So long as community workers and institutions do the work of the family for the family, they contribute to its delinquency." Yes, even the church can not, it ought not even try to take over the chief responsibility. Much of the time which the church must spend in giving Christian instruction might well be devoted to Christian parents!

Prayer at mealtime is self-evident in the Christian family. "When thou hast eaten and art full . . . beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God," is the clear commandment in Deuteronomy. John Milton unmercifully flays the ungrateful glutton when he writes:

"For swinish gluttony
Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude
Crams and blasphemes his Feeder."

But grace at meals will hardly be sufficient; it must lead at least to the regular use of the family altar or devotions. The past dec-

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Family Week

MAY 6–13 will be observed across the nation as National Family Week. To the Christian church this observance gives a golden opportunity to emphasize family religion and the co-operation of church and home for the spiritual nurture of the growing generation. It is a time for renewed effort to bring parents into partnership with the church in the program of Christian education.

Both home and church activities can emphasize this during the week. On Mother's Day, May 13, the special observance can be focused on the day as a festival of the Christian home.

However, the fulfillment of Family Week is "a year-round alliance between home and church." To secure this, some careful planning must be done and the work followed up persistently. Jumping from one special "observance" to another results in a nervous, superficial type of churchmanship and gives no stability in the great purposes of our Christian religion.

Wherever it is feasible some plan should be carried through to bring parents in closer touch with the school. Perhaps the best method is to have them visit the school. But then it should be a visit with fruitful purposes in view. Simply to visit in order to please a little child or to show good will toward the teacher is hardly enough when at the same time there could be arranged a conference between the parents and their child's teacher and specific steps agreed upon as things to do to help foster the child's spiritual growth. It is only as teachers and parents see their task together that they can co-operate in accomplishing it.

In the present issue Professor Adolph C. Streng of Sequin, Texas, has a thought-provoking article on "That It May Be Well with Our Children Always and Forever." One could wish that all teachers would be inspired by its zeal for the eternal welfare of all pupils who come under their care. One could go further, and wish that every teacher would share the article with the parents of his pupils. In the final analysis, not even the church can, or ought to try to, take the place of the home in the spiritual nurture of the family.

We Go Visiting

By HERMAN G. NELSON

WHEN I visited the Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Sunday School on the south side of Chicago in February, my curiosity was aroused by the presence of an alert-appearing man who did not seem to have any duties but who stood at the far end of one of the Sunday school rooms like a listening post. When I entered into conversation with him, I learned to my surprise that he was one of two deacons assigned each Sunday to attend the Sunday school period as observers.

"We take assignments twice a year, one month at a time, to serve as official observers in the Sunday school for the board of deacons," he told me.

Miss Esther Johnson, superintendent, informed me that the board practice had proved most beneficial to the Sunday school and to the deacons. She said it also gave visible evidence that the deacons are responsible for the Sunday school and the educational program of the church and that the Sunday school teachers and officers are responsible to the deacons as the board of education in the church.

It was the first time in my visits to various Sunday schools that I had been informed of such a practice. In addition, other deacons are among the Sunday school teachers at Gustavus Adolphus, as they probably are in most churches. The idea has merit. The deacon observers make themselves as unobtrusive as possible, but their presence is felt in a wholesome way. "They never bother or scold us," Miss Johnson told me. "We like to have them present. We feel they are our friends. Their presence makes us strive to do our very best."

Gustavus Adolphus Sunday School is fortunate in having for its use attractive basement quarters in the church proper and also a new parish hall alongside and connected with the church. Separate opening and closing exercises are conducted by each department, a full hour being devoted to Sunday school from 9:30 to 10:30 A. M.

Although some pupils straggl

in late, each department head makes it a policy to begin on time.

One of the attractive features of the Gustavus Adolphus Sunday School, to my mind, is the department just for high school students. This group meets in a pleasant fellowship room on the second floor of the new parish hall. Into it are transferred all the boys and girl following confirmation. It is seemingly made so attractive that the confirmand wants to join this group, thereby overcoming the tendency that exists that one is finished with Sunday school after confirmation. When I looked into the room where the class was in session, I found the boys and girls to be at ease and apparently intently enjoying a class period of Christian instruction and fellowship.

From this visit and others, I have come to feel that Sunday schools should treat high school students as a group apart and to provide them with as attractive classrooms and qualified teachers as they enjoy in high school on weekdays. I feel that Gustavus Adolphus has succeeded in providing just that for its young people of high school age.

I was happy I chose February 4 to visit the Gustavus Adolphus Church because on that date all the junior and intermediate department classes, constituting one department under Miss Johnson's supervision, attended the church service in a body. They sat by classes in the front pews on one side of the church and rendered the song just before the pastor's sermon. In singing, the group turned around in their pews to face the audience. It made a striking effect. The song, rehearsed just previously at the closing of the Sunday school period, was well rendered.

Gustvaus Adolphus Sunday School has an enrollment of 365 students, officers and teachers and an additional cradle roll of 99 children, who are under three years old, the age when they are allowed to enter Sunday school. The enrollment is divided as follows: beginners, 52; primary, 90; juniors 70; intermediates, 79; and high school, 74. In addition, there is an adult Bible class which is taught by the pastor, the Rev. Ragnar Moline. It meets in the church auditorium and varies in size.

On the Sunday I visited the church, the weather was bad and the streets and sidewalks were an icy sheet, but the attendance was 212. The offerings average $15 to $16 per Sunday. The envelope sys-

tem is used in the junior and intermediate departments, but experience has proven that children in the beginners and primary departments like to drop their pennies and nickels into the collection plate or box. Therefore envelopes are not used in these departments.

When the parish house was built about three years ago, the Sunday school pledged $1,000 as its share and every bit of it was received in pennies. The Sunday school department became the first of the church organizations to raise its quota or pledge.

Twenty-five teachers and three officers constitute the teaching and administrative personnel. They meet the first Thursday evening each month at a home and frequently a 100 per cent attendance is achieved. A teachers' training class is conducted twice a year. Incumbent teachers and others who wish to teach enroll. Formerly the class was held on five successive evenings in a single week. Now it is held one night a week for five successive weeks.

Before becoming general superintendent two years ago, Miss Johnson was Sunday school treasurer for 14 years. She is a secretary with Armour and Company.

A Sunday school library was recently started and about 50 of the children are borrowing books from it. They can get the books either before or after the Sunday school hour. The library consists mostly of children's books and is in the process of being enlarged. The plan is to encourage children to read books with a Christian motive and background.

The new Christian Growth Courses introduced in the fall of 1944 are being used with success, according to Miss Johnson. "The teachers and children like this material and seem to get a great deal from it," she commented. Memory work is stressed, especially in the primary department.

Aside from the Sunday school, the church conducts a nursery, under the direction of Miss Hilma Lind, making use of the beginners' department. Here mothers leave their children while they attend church service.

In the Rev. Ragnar Moline, Gustavus Adolphus congregation has an aggressive, much-alive pastor, who is fully aware of the fact that the church of tomorrow is the Sunday school of today.

In the end, the things that count are the things you can't count.
—*The Pick-Up.*

The Way and Pay of a Sunday School Teacher

By CONSTANT JOHNSON

TRIBUTES such as "She was my Sunday school teacher," "He was my Bible class teacher," spoken with much love and fervor, are often heard in every community and are ample proof of the high place and great influence of a Sunday school teacher. The influence of a consecrated Sunday school teacher lives on long after the details of the lesson material have been forgotten and long after the teacher has been promoted to the Sunday school above.

Having been asked to give an an inspirational address to a group of Sunday school teachers from several Lutheran congregations who had completed a six-weeks teacher training course, the writer prepared and sent a questionnaire to twenty teachers, many of them veterans in the work. Although the outline for the address was prepared before the replies to the questionnaire were received, many of the answers given are interwoven in this article. The questions were: "What in your estimation are the main qualifications of a Sunday school teacher?" "Give some practical suggestions on how you prepare for your teaching." "What results are you seeking for your class?" "Name some of the compensations or rewards of teaching in Sunday school."

The Way of the Sunday School Teacher

It is evident that by "way" we mean the qualifications, especially the spiritual qualifications of a teacher. It is not within the scope of this article to deal theoretically with methods of teaching.

1. He loves the Saviour. Surely the first and foremost qualification of a teacher is that he knows Christ as his own Saviour. To be sure, the Word is efficacious apart from the teacher or preacher, and yet teacher and preacher should be the embodiment of what they teach and preach. Admittedly the chief aim of teaching is to lead the pupil to Christ and into a deeper fellowship with Christ, and this aim

can be most nearly approximated when the teacher has himself experienced the new life in Christ. Upon those who have passed the one-question examination on "Lovest thou me?" Jesus bestows the great privilege and opportunity, "Feed my lambs." To the disciples, to the believing church, not to everybody, Jesus gave the commission, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." The blind can not lead the blind.

It follows that the teacher who knows Christ lives Christ. An exemplary Christian life is an important part of the teacher's equipment. The life of a teacher makes a stronger appeal and more lasting impression than words. It is easy for the children to know if the teacher is living and experiencing what he teaches. The teacher is to be "in the world but not of the world." It is the aim of teaching, by the grace of God, to form and and develop various attitudes in the life of the pupils—love for the Word, love for church, love for parents, respect for authority, etc. The pupil looks for and should be able to find these attitudes in the life of the teacher. The boys and girls are to see Christ in the books of the *Christian Growth Series,* but they are also to witness Christ in the Christian life and growth of the teacher.

The teacher who loves the Saviour also loves His voice, His Word. A spiritually strong teacher spends much time in Bible reading, not primarily to find thoughts for his teaching, but to nourish his own soul. Various methods and suggestions for studying the Bible can be obtained. The teacher should have a good working knowledge of the Bible. He should have a clear understanding of the fundamental teachings of the Bible: sin, redemption, faith, baptism, etc. The only answer that the majority of those who enter the confirmation class can give to the question, "What has Christ done for us?" is, "He died for us." When asked, "What does this mean?" very few have any explanation to offer.

The consecrated Sunday school teacher feels the need of prayer. It has been said that we reflect the company we keep. If much time is spent in company with with Christ in prayer, that fellowship will be reflected in our lives. Teachers who are heart-concerned about the souls entrusted to them mention their pupils by name before the throne of grace during the week. The teacher who has prayed much during the week goes before his class on Sunday, yes,

with much meekness, but also with much spiritual confidence. By praying much he will be able to lead his class into the atmosphere of prayer.

Knowing Christ, living Christ, meditating and praying much—there are no substitutes for these qualifications.

2. He loves children. The successful teacher loves souls. He knows that he is dealing with an immortal soul who is the gift of God, and the gifts of God we handle with love and tender care. Some of the pupils may not be very attractive, but we ourselves are not so attractive either and yet God loves us. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

When the teacher loves the children entrusted to his care he will endeavor to enter the life of each one and acquire as much knowledge about each child as possible. A teacher states: "I try to see the lesson from the junior's point of view, remembering his capacities." One boy may try the patience of the teacher, but after the teacher has visited his home and learned about his home conditions, he understands more intelligently how to deal with this child. Such a visit with a resultant clearer understanding of the boy's problems may mean the making of that boy.

One teacher adds this qualification: "To have a longing to tell others."

3. He loves work. Successful teaching is not a lazy man's work. Sunday school teaching starts early in the week. One teacher stated that she begins to prepare her Sunday school lesson for the following Sunday on Sunday evening and adds that in this way one becomes saturated with the lesson material during the week. It is highly important to retire on Saturday evening in time to obtain sufficient rest. The young Sunday school teacher who told her class on Sunday morning, "I am terribly tired today. I was out till one o'clock this morning," could not teach her class aright, neither was she permitted to teach any longer.

The general preparation of a teacher requires time and effort—studying of books and magazines on teaching methods, pupil traits and attitudes, age groups, etc., and attendance at teaching training courses, Bible study classes, and Sunday school teacher's meetings. Then the good teacher spends much time on each individual lesson. This sound advice was offered by one teacher: "You must *know* the lesson before you can *teach* it." Adds another teacher: "It is better

to explain one word which the child knows rather than to miss one he doesn't know." Teachers of experience recommend that the questions to be asked be prepared in advance. The writer can testify of a well-nigh disastrous experience because of a loosely constructed question. We had talked to the Sunday school about foreign missions. In order to make a vivid comparison between conditions in China and America we said: "Just think if you had been born in China and lived there under such terrible conditions, what would you have been today?" A ten-year-old boy answered, "A Chinaman," and his answer was correct according to the wording of the question. Teachers recommend that the teaching should be varied. Every lesson should not be planned in exactly the same way. "Let the child give his own idea on the particular lesson" is one suggestion given.

Visitation entails much work. Sometimes we call it "ringing door bells"; for the Sunday school teacher it ought to be rather "touching heartstrings." A visit to a home where the spiritual environment is lacking and taking a Christlike interest in the welfare of both parents and children will generally bring rich blessings.

Experiental knowledge of Christ, love for children, a willingness to spend and be spent for the care of souls, these are priorities in the life of a Sunday school teacher.

The Pay of a Sunday School Teacher

In a way it is irrelevant to talk about the pay of a Sunday school teacher, because a consecrated teacher is not concerned about pay. If there are paid Sunday school teachers, the writer confesses ignorance about such. No, the real teacher is not working for the usual kind of pay. He keeps on and on and generally there are no limitations as to the age of teacher or length of service. Each church body has many Sunday school teachers who have served both one and two score years. But there are large rewards, even in the Sunday school militant, and these are a source of joy and encouragement to the teacher.

1. The joy of service. It always brings real joy and genuine satisfaction to know that one is in the service of his Saviour and Lord. To answer affirmatively in word and deed the loving but firm command "teaching them" is ever counted as an undeserved privilege.

2. The assurance that our work

in the Lord is not in vain. The Lord has made Himself responsible for the fruits of our labors. He gives the great drought. Therefore, the teacher even if he doesn't witness as large results as he had hoped, should know the certainty that the sowing of the good seed will in God's own time bring a harvest. It does happen that fruits, visible to the eye, appear only after the teacher has been laid away. Sometimes there are no visible harvests until the grass is growing on the teacher's grave. "My word shall not return void."

3. Beholding results of teaching. Must teachers see results of their labor of love in Christ? Their pupils give evidence of knowing Christ as their Saviour, they are zealous about the salvation of others, they are faithful in the work of the church, they are Christian citizens of whom one need not be ashamed. Often have we heard men and women speak with love and gratitude of their Sunday school teachers, but we have also heard gray-haired teachers say with joy-filled eyes and tear-dimmed eyes: "He was my Sunday school pupil." "She was in my class."

4. The information and training received through teaching. One teacher confesses that "the teacher gets the most out of the teaching." And it is true that to study the Bible, Catechism, teaching methods, lessons, and pupils for years can not but give us a kind of college education in what we may term as the Sunday School Education Course with the "C.E." degree, "consecrated, efficient." Who can measure the blessings of mingling with children. "To have the friendship of the children is sufficient reward," says one teacher. The children are realists. How real Christ, how real everyday Christian living is to them. Great reward came to the parents who after the morning devotion heard their three-year-old boy say: "Now Jesus can play with me in the sandpile." Every teacher carries with him an ample supply of short sermons preached by the pupils of his classes. Here are two examples: The teacher had spoken about the practice of keeping the Bible locked in the bookcase in the front room instead of keeping it in a place where it could be used every day. Turning to the class he asked, "Does that seem right to you to lock the Bible up and never use it?" "No," replied a ten-year-old, "that is just the same as trying to lock Jesus up." The pastor in catechizing the Sunday school was asking as he counted on his fingers,

"What do boys and girls need in order to live and grow as they should?" After the children had given four answers, "food," "homes," "clothing," "schools," there was a pause. "Have we forgotten someone?" said the pastor as he pointed to the fifth finger. "We have forgotten Jesus," said a little girl. "But," said the pastor, "does it seem right to put Him last?" "No, put Him on the big finger," volunteered another child. It was her way of saying that Christ must be first in our lives.

No one can work conscientiously with these "little ones" and remain untouched. Teaching the children and taught by the children is the complete story.

Toil on, thou faithful teacher! The Lord will lead you in *His* way and give you *His* pay.

Developing Leadership in the Church

By MARCUS C. RIEKE

LEADERSHIP! What is a leader? If you look for the word in the dictionary, you will find that it means everything from "a guide" to "a horse harnessed before others." Well, strange as it may seem, I like both of the above definitions. A leader is "a guide" and, if we may use the expression, he often must "work like a horse."

When we speak of developing leadership in the church we refer to the training and nurturing of individuals to become willing and zealous *servants*. We think always of the greatest Leader—Christ Jesus, our blessed and only Saviour as the perfect Leader. So He was. He left us the precept: "Whosoever would be chief among you, let him be your servant."

That settles it for us. Developing leadership in the church then means developing servants in the church.

In this vital task, you who are Sunday school teachers and officers, have a glorious opportunity. God has called you to a position of leadership as a teacher of youth.

Yours is the priceless privilege of work with youth. Yours the happy assignment to guide and lead them into the proper understanding of the needs our church faces; yours the chance to set their feet on the paths of service; yours the opportunity to help set their goals; yours the challenge to give the vision.

Youth Are Willing

A commanding officer came before his men and said: "Men I have a job for you to do. It's dangerous. It's far beyond the call of duty. I tell you honestly, I doubt if many of those who volunteer will come back. It's important and I want some of you to offer yourself. In order not to embarrass any of you I am going to turn my back for a moment. While my back is turned, if there are any of you who will volunteer, please take one step forward."

The C. O. turned his back for a moment. Then he faced his men. They were still in a straight line. He looked at the men and then spoke.

"Don't any of you love your country? Are you all a bunch of cowards? I am heartily ashamed of you. I thought I had Men!"

The lieutenant on the end of the line interrupted the officer with a salute and said: *"Sir! While your back was turned every man took a step forward."*

And so they had.

Our youth have done the same. Wherever an appeal has come to them for kingdom service they have responded. Whenever our youth have been shown the great need for enlistment and service to the Lord and His church there has been a voluntary response that has been heartening.

Presenting the Cause

So much depends upon the Sunday school teacher's presentation of the work and service to be given. If the teacher is personally convinced that the work of the church is the most important and vital work in the world, the story of each opportunity to serve will be presented in a way that inspires and fires the prospect to want to perform that service with all his heart.

Simply to say, in a matter-of-fact way, that the church needs pastors, social workers, nurses, educators, missionaries and the like is not sufficient. Nor will it do.

The matter of leadership, serviceship, is thrilling. It is exciting. It is vital. The Lord has asked us to do it! He is counting on us to

do it! We must make haste! There is a real thrill in Christian leadership. The work that we do in His name, and for His kingdom, lasts for eternity! It takes a real soldier to battle in the Lord's army. No place for weaklings! No place for cowards!

Let every teacher present the urgent needs of the church to the pupils in such an interesting and heart-warming way that all through their Sunday school days they will be thinking, dreaming, praying, about the time when they can prepare for the world's greatest service. When you, teachers, really believe we need Christian leadership you can't talk about the need for leaders and servants without bubbling over with zeal and enthusiasm for the cause of Christ. So much depends upon presenting the cause. Do it well.

Know the needs. What are they? Let's list the most pressing ones.

First of all, we should develop among our youth the spirit of "Pastor, may I help?" It's a matter of "first in Jerusalem," isn't it? Right at home, in the local congregation there is need for Christian leadership. Let's teach our youth to be helpers, builders, soul winners, right on the spot. Even the smallest service, multiplied by many willing hands, becomes a power in the kingdom extension right at home. We start there. Ask your pastor for a list of helps he would like to have. It's surprising to see how many things youth can do to help out right at home.

Now we are ready for presentations of other needs.

Pastors to proclaim the glorious news of salvation through Christ Jesus the Lord.

Foreign Missionaries, both clerical and lay; men and women, to be messengers of the gospel.

Parish and Social Workers to strengthen our local congregations and gather in the lost.

Deaconesses to perform their many duties of love and mercy in our hospitals, homes, and churches.

Sunday School and Parochial Teachers to work with youth, unfolding for them the love of Jesus.

Child Welfare Workers to help curb delinquency, to bring these unfortunates the story of His love.

Doctors and Nurses for the ministry of mercy through the church's homes and mission stations.

Office Workers in our homes and and at headquarters.

Writers to proclaim through the printed word, the story of our work in Jesus' name.

Scientists and Agriculturists in our schools and on our mission fields.

There are still others. However, the above are the most urgent needs. Let the teacher inform herself of these needs and present them to youth in the most interesting way possible.

What to Look For

Among your Sunday school youth look for basic qualifications of leadership and then do all possible to nurture and develop them.

Look first of all for a strong personal Christian faith. Every position of leadership is dependent upon that basic fact. Then look for these qualifications among your youth: faithfulness in prayer, initiative, love for others, and a true spirit of friendliness. Once you find these qualifications it will not be difficult to guide such a youth into Christian leadership.

Follow Through

It's positively criminal to neglect the follow through. I mean, that after we have interested youth in pursuing Christian services, we dare not fail to see that their interests are kept alive and their curiosity for information is satisfied. This past week several letters have come to my desk on this very point. Let me quote a few sentences from them: "I have spent four years in college, five years teaching, three years in graduate school, and two years in the seminary. I feel very familiar with student views. Frankly, most of our Lutheran students are very ignorant of the needs and opportunities for Christian service. . . . The wide sweep of the work of the church would surprise, interest, and stimulate many of our young people if only we follow them through."

Here's another: "The church has not encouraged its youth to seek training and to develop their special ability for leadership in definite areas of Christian endeavor. I know whereof I speak. From 1937 to 1943 I was engaged in graduate work. . . . During all that time I received not one whit of encouragement from any church official, leader, or body. In fact, on the contrary, I was very definitely discouraged."

Here's one more: "Two men from ——— have given up the ministry. . . . One girl gave up parish work . . . another is seeking the immediacy of war nursing. No one is following through."

Let's stop this horrible mistake. Follow through must be the

watchword. From the earliest intimation of youth to serve in capacities of leadership, let's follow them. Certainly it's work. Surely, it takes time. Yes, there are difficulties. *But what of it!* If we are convinced the cause is worthy, the sacrifice will not be too great.

Follow through! In every way possible. Visit! Write! Telephone! Send tracts! Get others to help follow through! Pray for them! All of us must lose ourselves in love and service to these potential leaders. Then we will have taken the big step toward developing leadership in the church.

Someone has said: "He that multiplies the worker is greater is greater than he that does the work." Our Saviour said: "I am among you as he that serveth." May ours be a service of love for youth, guiding them into kingdom service and Christian leadership.

My Brother's Keeper

When John Dillinger, most notorious criminal of the '30's, was a boy in his early teens, he was taken to court for some minor charge. He was released on probation and went back to his parents and started attending a Sunday school in his little village town.

However, some of the parents in the school heard that a boy with a court record was attending, went to his teacher and said, "If John Dillinger continues to be in your class, I shall have to withdraw my son."

The teacher, not knowing what to do but anxious to keep favor of the parents, told John what had happened.

He never returned and less than a score of years later was known and killed as the most dangerous criminal in the country.—*Sunday.*

Some Problems of the Rural Church School

By ARNOLD E. CARLSON

IF the rural church, in its educational program, is afflicted with the disease "localitis," its work will be very discouraging. That is, if it has no vision beyond its own parish, it will be a most disheartening task to train so large a part of its youth only to lose them from its own ranks. As long as rural birth rates are from forty to fifty per cent above the number required to maintain a stationary population, it can be expected that about two-fifths of all the children who go to rural Sunday schools and Luther Leagues will leave their home church and move into the city. Yet, if the rural church has a vision of itself as a unit in the training of men and women to take their place as responsible citizens of the kingdom of God, wherever they are, its task at once becomes a tremendous challenge and a glorious opportunity. Today three-fourths of those in the positions of leadership in the urban churches have come from some small rural parish. That fact is a real tribute to the rural church schools of the past.

Today it is readily acknowledged that a rising tide of paganism in rural areas will result in a national calamity. To prevent such a tide and rather win boys and girls for the kingdom of God is the chief task of the rural church. But the very title of this article suggests that such a task has numerous difficulties. Let us consider them. First of all, if the rural church is to train such a large proportion of the nation's citizens of tomorrow, it must reach a larger proportion of the nation's children today. Too many rural Sunday schools are made up only of the children whose parents are members of the church. Not all of America's "fifty per cent unchurched" are found in urban areas. Many are neighbors to those who belong to the rural churches. Here is another instance where we may have been thinking too much in terms of our nationality background, instead of visualizing the

whole community as our field and responsibility. A certain Sunday school teacher had labored hard and patiently to get the children of some neighbors to attend Sunday school. The children had no Lutheran background at all. When they were appearing on the Christmas program, their parents overheard an elderly couple seated behind them make this remark: "Huh, what are those children doing here? Their folks aren't Swedish!" And that was the end of one prospective family's interest in one of our Lutheran churches. Unless we believe that the rural Sunday school has something to offer every unchurched child in our community, regardless of nationality, we had better close our doors. And the task of bringing them in is the responsibility of the entire membership, not just the teachers, or the superintendent, or the pastor.

But even after the children of an entire community are reached, the problems are by no means solved. Much has been written about the inadequate equipment of the rural Sunday school. Perhaps it has been so overemphasized that an inferiority complex has resulted. It would be easy to think that effective religious education could not be carried on without all the modern aids of an up-to-date parish house. Nevertheless, most rural church schools are woefully unequipped for their task. Movable partitions or curtains could at least be installed to give some needed privacy to each class. Maps and blackboards, easily provided, are inestimable aids to good teaching.

Although this very series of articles indicates a change, it has been true that most church school publications have been adapted to the large urban church schools found in such cities as Detroit, Chicago, and Minneapolis. In some instances they just have not fit into the rural situations. The illustrations and ideals held before the children are usually taken from urban life. A few statistics might be of interest. They are taken from the Augustana Synod but doubtless would hold true in other bodies also. There the average Sunday school enrollment for the Synod in 1943 was 64 unconfirmed scholars. A study of 136 churches, chosen from both large city districts and rural districts, showed that while there were 26 schools with an enrollment above 100, there were 66 schools with an enrollment of less than 50. Publication houses and parish education boards could possibly be of greater service to the rural church schools if they kept such facts in mind.

Possibly one of the greatest problems which face the rural church school is connected with teaching and administration. I think it can be safely said that many teachers have been too young. I know of congregations where the teaching staff is recruited chiefly from the last two confirmation classes. Such teachers should themselves be in adult classes. In some instances the confirmation certificate is also considered as a certificate to teach Sunday school. Not only are such teachers too young, but they often leave the community by the time they have become sufficiently experienced and matured to be good teachers.

I am not sure whether it ever became very general to have teacher-training meetings in the rural areas. For the duration, at least, that seems almost an impossibility. Yet surely we must move in that direction as quickly and as definitely as possible. It seems incongruous that public school teachers, having thirty hours per week to teach children those things important for life, should be required to have from two to four years of college training in addition to high school, while those whose task it now is to prepare children for both time and eternity in the short space of thirty minutes per week, have no special preparation at all.

Another difficulty which the rural school faces lies in the fact that it is well-nigh impossible for the rural pastor to give any teaching or supervisory assistance. Most rural parishes have at least two congregations. The pastor is generally conducting service in one place while Sunday school is being conducted in the other. Often he has no vital contact with the children until they come for confirmation instruction. This is another reason why teacher-training classes, where the pastor can learn the problems of the Sunday school and assist in solving them, are especially important in rural areas.

The problems of the rural church school are many. Solutions have not been included here. Perhaps cut and dried answers to these problems are not to be found. However, if the rural church will sense its missionary opportunity and responsibility in training boys and girls to be citizens in the kingdom of God and to take their place in the front ranks of those who are doing the Lord's work, wherever they are, there will be less cause to fear for the future of tomorrow's church and nation. It will be doing the tasks to which the Father has committed it, and therefore it will not fail.

Our Primary Children Learn "Botany of Bible Lands"

By RUBYE PATTON NORDGREN

OF ALL God's gifts to us, few afford more pleasure than His botanical wonders. A group of primary children inquired of their teacher, "What fruits grew in Jesus' country?" The teacher said, "We'll find out together." The following is a brief report of some of the class's findings via that delightful experience which lasted almost a full year. Each Sunday a short time was devoted to the study. References were looked up in the Bible and much information, inspiration and interest in Jesus' country resulted. The pupils listed *weeds, flowers and trees for beauty; herbs and trees used for food or medicine;* and *other useful trees and shrubs.* Space permits only a a brief listing.

Used for Food or Medicine

The Rose of Jericho, which is not a rose, but really belongs to the mustard family, is said to have closed at the Crucifixion and to have opened again at the Resurrection. It is also known as the resurrection plant and is regarded with awe by the native Arabs who live in the Syrian Desert. This clever little plant adapts itself to the dry and desert country. When there is no moisture the rose of Jericho curls up into a dry ball and waits for a friendly wind to give it a push, whereupon it goes gaily gamboling along until it finds some moisture somewhere. Here it settles down, opens up, sheds its seed and stays until another dry spell comes along.

The *Mustard* tree in Palestine often grows eight feet high. The seeds are very small. Matt. 13. 31; Matt. 17. 20.

Balm of Gilead is a plant that grows twice as high as most primary pupils. It produces a sweet resin prized for its healing properties. Gen. 37. 25.

Oleaster or oil tree is abundant in Palestine. It bears bitter green berries from which an inferior oil is extracted. Is. 41. 19.

Spikenard is a plant that blos-

soms and is used for the costly oil it contains. Mk. 14. 3.

The *Cinnamon* tree also blooms and has green glossy leaves. Its bark is ground up and used for flavor in breads and cakes. In Jesus' country it is used as a holy oil. Ex. 30. 23.

The *Anise* plant has small seeds, also used in cookies and rye bread, and for medicine. Matt. 23. 23. *Cummin* and *mint* are also mentioned in this reference. Several children kept a list of "the things we use in our country, too." We found other garden herbs such as *rue,* Luke 11. 42. This was of interest since many had herb gardens at home.

Sweet Cane or *Calamus* furnished one of the ingredients of holy oil. Jer. 6. 20.

The *Frankincense* tree is grown in India. It is a small tree that produces a white gum, used chiefly in religious ceremonies. Every child connects the *Three Wisemen* story with frankincense. Ex. 30. 34; Matt. 2. 11.

The *Carob* tree resembles our locust trees. The seeds and pods are eaten by swine, and the very poor people. Some think it the food of John the Baptist. Mk. 1. 6.

Millet resembles our own grain by that name and is used for bread. Ezek. 4. 9. *Lentils* are small flat seeds which are often mixed with meal for bread. They make delicious soup (we had lentil soup at our homes after this discovery).

The *Palestine Grape* is white and grows in large bunches. It is said that Ex. 13. 23 is no exaggeration.

The *Sycamore Fig,* Luke 19. 4, and the *Date Palm* are favorite fruits. Some of our class had seen the date palm in this country. It often grows to great heights, and its fibrous trunk is used for rafters, gate posts, etc. Ex. 15. 27; Ps. 92. 12. The *Black Fig* tree grows with wide-spreading branches. Its fruit is black and very sweet. Matt. 24. 32.

The *Olive* tree resembles our apple tree in appearance. It thrives best in stony ground and is beautiful when in fruit. The olive branch is a symbol of peace. Gen. 8. 11.

Pomegranates were available, so the teacher cut one of these orange-shaped fruits, brownish-red in color, and the class tasted the delicious seeds. Num. 20. 5. "It is almost like we were visiting in Jesus' country," one child volunteered.

The *Terebinth* nut tree produces a nut similar to pistachios. It is said to be the tree upon which

Judas Iscariot hanged himself. Gen. 35. 4.

Mandrake looks like our rhubarb, bears rich purple flowers and harvests a fruit the size of a large plum. Gen. 30. 14.

Weeds

The *Weed* list included *Brambles,* often used for fences (Gen. 3. 18); *Tares,* similar in looks to wheat, but it is bitter and must be carefully pulled out before wheat harvest (Matt. 13. 25); *Nettles,* a tall plant, the sting of which is painful (Zeph. 2. 9); *Reed,* used to make musical instruments (Matt. 11. 7); *Hyssop,* grows on walls and out of rocky places and is used for brushes and sprinkling purposes (Exod. 12. 22). *Flax,* which is similar to ours, has a lovely blue blossom; linen is produced from this plant (Josh. 2. 6). From *Papyrus,* the ancients made paper for writing purposes (Ex. 2. 3). *Shittim* trees produce a fine quality of wood, such as was used for the woodwork in the Tabernacle (Ex. 26. 5).

Flowers and Other Trees

The *Myrtle* is a tree of twenty feet, has dark glossy leaves and white flowers. The dried flowers and leaves are sold for perfumes. Is. 55. 13. *Lillies of the Field* grow in profusion (Matt. 6. 28).

The *Oleander,* thought to be the "willows" in Ps. 137. 2, grows to a height of twenty feet, and bears thousands of red flowers which resemble roses.

The *Castor Oil Plant* is luxuriant with foliage and blossoms and is thought to be the plant referred to in Jonah 4. 6 as Jonah's vine and gourd.

The *Cedar of Lebanon* grows high and wide, often twelve feet in diameter. Its wood is considered imperishable and travelers tell us of its delightful fragrance.

The results of this interesting research with the pupils might be summed up as follows: Our boys and girls acquired a real interest in and a more definite picture of that part of the world called the Holy Land; their impressions of Biblical facts were more real because of definite knowledge about trees, shrubs, etc. Time and effort spent to find pictures and information was well worth while for the enrichment of both teacher and pupils. May it be an enriching experience for others, too!

Activities in the Realm of Christian Education

By I. O. NOTHSTEIN

Convention in a Congregation. "The sixty-second annual Sunday school convention held by *Mount Carmel Church, near Hanover, Pa.,* the Rev. Robert C. Schiebel, pastor, featured H. L. Hamme of York, and several other speakers. This is the great homecoming fall meeting, and is an unusual event among churches."—*The Lutheran.*

* * *

Sunday School Attendance Going Up. It is a matter for encouragement to note that according to the latest Lutheran statistics there has been an increase in the number of children receiving instruction in church schools. For some years there have been consistent decreases in enrollment, but 1943 shows a net gain of 15,489 pupils for the whole church, or .8 per cent, over 1942. In the Augustana Synod the gain was 381 pupils, or about .3 per cent. The total enrollment in the entire Lutheran Church is 1,871,804 children, that of the Augustana Synod, 131,082. The synodical schools number 1,636, staffed by 16,249 officers and teachers. It is apparent that there is much room for more "life and growth" in this department.

* * *

"What Thine Hand Findeth to Do." It happened that in St. Peter's Lutheran congregation (U. L. C. A.) in Ottawa, Can., there were three children handicapped by deafness, so that they could not attend the regular classes in the Sunday school. A lady in the congregation, calling to her assistance a teacher from the public school staff who specializes in this work, has undertaken to instruct these children in Christianity in a special class in the Sunday school. It is hoped that other children in the city, similarly affected, will be able to take advantage of this special class.

* * *

Lexington Plan for Promoting Visual Education. In the Trinity Lutheran School, Lexington, Nebr. (Missouri Synod), visual education is supported by volun-

tary contributions of 5 and 10 cents from the pupils. Film programs are held twice a week. The sound projector is supplied free of charge by the teacher, Mr. Alfred Opitz. Frequently parents and other visitors attend and help with the financing of the program.

* * *

A Successful Weekday School Program. The Christian Century reports that the associated churches of Fort Wayne, Ind., are conducting a successful weekday school program. The enterprise has 58 classes in all 22 of the city's public schools, with 1,707 pupils enrolled. More than 80 per cent of the third and fourth grade pupils of the city are enrolled. In some schools, 100 per cent of the pupils attend the classes.

* * *

Bible Teachers' Training. The North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs has decided to offer financial assistance to those qualified for training as teachers of Bible courses being offered in the public schools of the state. Ten scholarships of $100 each are being given, and in addition teachers may apply for loans of as much as $150 for the first collegiate year and $200 for each of the three succeeding years.

More than 100 communities in North Carolina now offer elective courses in Bible, and the program is backed by the North Carolina Council of Churches. Over 22,000 students are enrolled in the courses, according to *R. N. S.,* and these courses are fully accredited by the State Department of Public Education for college entrance.

* * *

Absenteeism is a serious matter in church schools as well as in industry. An article in *The Parish School* for February has a number of good suggestions for combating the estimated 25 per cent of absenteeism in the average Sunday school. The problem, says the author, must be attacked co-operatively by each of the classes, by the teachers, by the parish secretary or some volunteer worker, and by the pastor or superintendent. The plan includes efforts to get the children who are absent because of removal to other communities relocated in new church homes.

* * *

Sunday School Enlistment Leader. The Parish and Church School Board of the United Lutheran Church has secured a leader for its work in reaching a goal of *"A million in our Sunday schools in the next five years."* The new head of the movement is the Rev.

William S. Avery of Detroit, Michigan. His headquarters will be in Philadelphia, Pa.

* * *

A Good Postwar Project. Our Saviour's Church (Norwegian Luth. C. of A.) of Beloit, Wis., is plannng to erect a $50,000 Sunday school building after the war. A fund-raising campaign has already been launched.

* * *

Public Schools Dismissed for a Lenten Service. The churches of Thief River Falls, Wis., petitioned the school authorities last year to allow the children to attend an Ash Wednesday service from 11 a. m. to noon. The petition was granted. One church (Trinity Norwegian Lutheran) reported that at their service over 500 children from the first grade through high school, with teachers from the public school and Sunday school, were present.

* * *

National Sunday School Week. The Laymen's National Committee, Rear Admiral Reginald R. Belknap (U. S. retired), chairman, has announced that it will sponsor a National Sunday School Week, early in April each year, for the purpose of stimulating church school attendance and support. The committee also sponsors National Bible Week each year.

Parish Day Schools. The Missouri Synod now has 1,219 parish day schools, with more than 73,000 pupils. About half the teachers are men and half women. Interest in and enthusiasm for the work is reported as on the increase. A movie in colors, presenting the work of the Christian Day School has been issued by the Board of Parish Education.

* * *

Superintendent Honored. Mr. Adolph O. Ericksen, Sunday school superintendent of the United Ev. Church of Winchester, Wis, (Norwegian Luth. Ch. of Am.), was recently honored for his forty years of service at a special service and dinner.

* * *

More Education Buildings. La Crescenta, Calif., Luth. Church (Aug. Synod) recently dedicated the first unit of a Sunday school building fully paid for.

Other churches planning the erection of church school buildings are: Angelica Luth. Church (Aug. Synod), Los Angeles, Calif., which is planning to erect an educational building and is raising a $100,000 expansion fund. Likewise Ebenezer Luth. Church (Aug. Synod), San Francisco, Calif.

Faith Luth. Church (U. L. C. A.), St. Paul, Minn., is planning

the erection of a thoroughly modern education building. The pastor baptized 349 infants the past year.

St. Paul's Luth. Church U. L. C. A.), Bucyrus, Ohio, expects to erect a $100,000 parish house, and likewise, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (U. L. C. A.), Minneapolis, is planning to build a modern educational building.

Solomon Luth. Church (Am. Luth. Ch.), Woodville, Ohio, has made plans to erect an educational building. We shall be happy to report the plans of other churches, and architectural details of the same, if the churches will inform this department. If your church is planning a forward movement in parish education, tell us about it.

Home Education

Issued by the National Kindergarten Association

Rotate Home Duties

By SARA E. NELSON

IT is a common saying that when one admits to not minding dishwashing any more, one has surely left youth behind. Assuredly there are few children who long for a dishwashing job. But many mothers are greatly to blame for the strong prejudice that often prevails. It is neither necessary nor kind to — figuratively speaking — tie a child to a dishpan.

This fact was brought home to me very clearly when visiting a home where there were six children ranging from six to sixteen years. Every child was expected to do several tasks about the house, yet each child, even the tiniest, had some voice in naming the jobs he preferred to do. On Saturday morning the mother held a council. She wrote on the children's blackboard the list of duties that had to be done during the coming week.

Each youngster spoke for certain specified choices and his initials were then affixed to that duty. Naturally the less obnoxious tasks were initialed off first. But there was a comradely spirit of good sportsmanship shown by all. For instance, since Minnie had washed the dishes every night the previous week, Bessie readily

agreed that she should take on the duty that week. Other assignments were as thoughtfully arranged. It took a few minutes to map out the schedule and write it down but it surely was time well spent.

We often grasp, automatically, "the easiest way out" without much consideration. Mother says hurriedly, "You do the dishes, Mabel." If Mabel has been hearing that every day for months, she is tired of it. Wouldn't it be music to her ears if her mother asked instead, "Will you tidy and dust the living room while I wash the dishes?" Try it and see her jump at the chance.

Instead of settling the dishwashing upon one child continually, why not ask yourself, "How can I best prepare my children to wait on themselves and cause others a minimum of trouble after they leave home?"

It has always been my contention that the primary domestic tasks to teach a child are to keep his clothes and all his personal belongings tidy and in their proper places and to make a bed neatly. Three years old isn't too young to teach a child to put his toys away and hang up his outer garments. Of course having shelves and clothes hooks that the child can reach easily is absolutely necessary for success. Six years old isn't too young to teach him how to make a bed. Let it be a game in the beginning. Let the child smooth and tuck in one side of the bed while Mother is doing the other. Later he can manage the bed successfully alone. If all the children in a household are held responsible for the care and tidying of their bedrooms, then Mother won't mind doing the dishes alone more often.

There is another reason for this exchange of duties. It is not so important as those we have already considered, but it is worthy of attention. When the young folks leave home and board out, as so many of them do, their landladies do not expect them to do the dishes. On the other hand, if they leave order and neatly-made beds in their wake, blessings will be called down upon their heads, and also upon the heads of the wise mothers who taught them the priceless attribute of neatness.

Copycats

By LOUISE PRICE BELL

BLAST that scooter . . . mean ole thing!" growled little Bobby when the scooter wheel failed to turn just as he wanted it to do. "I said *Blast!*" and he

looked up at his mother who was chatting with a friend.

"Where in the word did he *ever* pick that up!" she exclaimed in a shamefaced manner. Then, to Bobby, "Never let me hear you say that naughty word again!"

Children are natural imitators and born copycats. This mother knew very well that Bobby had heard his daddy use that word and that was why she was shamefaced. Had she *not* known that, she wouldn't have been so embarrassed and would probably have said calmly, "Bobby, we use the word *blast* when men put a stick of dynamite into the rocks to break them apart. It isn't sensible to use it with regard to a scooter." And Bobby would have asked some questions and then would have been pretty well convinced.

When little Sara hears her mother say, "I can't go to the Red Cross this afternoon, Madge; I have a splitting headache," and then sees her playing bridge with three neighbors all the afternoon, she copies. She tells her little friend Jean that she can't play *house* because she has to help her mother or take a nap, when what she really wants is to play *jacks* with another friend. Yet nine times out of ten, if her mother overhears this she will reprimand her small daughter, saying she is not telling the truth.

The telephone rings. "If that is Mrs. Green, tell her I'm not here," says Mother. "I can't talk to her now."

Mother doesn't think *that* is wrong, but actually she is telling her little girl to lie—to do the very thing for which she often punishes her. And then she wonders why the child is not more careful to tell the truth!

A little child of four started complaining that she was tired, had a backache, a sideache, and so on. Finally, the father became alarmed and took her to the family doctor, who examined her and found that there was nothing wrong with the child. He knew the mother, and in confidence he told the father:

"Mary is only imitating her mother, Mr. Keener. Mrs. Keener is slightly neurotic and evidently complains in front of the child. Now the child is forming the same complaining habit, I am sorry to say. If you don't mind, I think I'll have a talk with Mrs. Keener."

It was fortunate in this case that the doctor was a student of psychology as well as medicine. It was also fortunate that Mrs. Keener was a sensible woman who had her child's welfare at heart.

She accepted the advice of her physician, began to check up on her constant complaining, and actually cured herself of that very bad habit. Purely as a matter of course, little Mary ceased her complaints. She didn't hear them, so she couldn't imitate them.

A cheery "Good Morning" is the best way to start every day, and if the chidren in the family hear this, they are pretty likely to go through life with the "cheerful morning face" that everyone enjoys seeing. If, on the other hand, parents are grumpy in the morning, they can well expect their offspring to be the same. For children are the most wide-awake little copycats one can find anywhere!

A Happy Balance

By HELEN GREGG GREEN

RECENTLY I read of an incident relative to a two-and-one-half-year-old child who was eating his noon meal with his mother and two guests who were strangers to him.

The mother and her friends became engrossed in conversation and no attention was paid to little Bobby. Finally, they heard a lusty cough. Looking up they saw Bobby pick up the pitcher of milk and carefully fill his glass without spilling a drop. This naturally brought smiles and words of admiration from the guests.

Apparently his desire to be noticed was then satisfied; he ate the rest of his dinner contentedly.

Children often develop a hunger for attention. I have a friend who, although she was managing a house as well as taking care of three daughters and a husband, decided she wanted to make a full-time contribution to the war effort. She reviewed her business training, and when the course was finished she accepted a position with the government. Her youngest daughter, seven-year-old Marguerite, missed her very much.

One evening as the family were sitting at the table and the conversation was proceeding along lines that challenged mature minds, Marguerite suddenly held up her hand, as the children do in school when they want attention, and said, "Daddy, let's talk about *me!*"

This passed as an amusing childish desire to be in the limelight, but in a day or two Marguerite said confidentially to her mother, "Mommie, when you get home tonight will you talk with me first, before you talk with anyone else?" And later, "Mommie, when you come home tonight will you ask

me what I did all day at camp like you did last night?"

"So then," the mother told me, "I understood. 'There is hunger there,' I told my husband, as we discussed the problem. Because Virginia and Connie have more mature minds and are honor students at school, it's only natural to bring them to the front in our conversations. And Marguerite has been feeling overlooked."

"You're always so analytical. You look behind your children's actions," I told her.

"Well, I think that's important!" she answered. "Ray and I decided to talk this thing over with the older girls. With their co-operation we're going to fill that need of our seven-year-old."

This is a need so elemental that all parents should watch for it and never permit it to get out of bounds. Children should be in charge of adults who like them, who devote time to listening to them, who help make a pretty definite routine for them.

I am a volunteer assistant in a nursery school where there are a number whom the uninitiated might call *problem children*. Particularly difficult when I first entered the school were two boys who were almost continually doing something to attract attention. They were lads nobody seemed to want, the head of the school had explained. The showing off, he told me, was caused by a desire to be noticed.

After hearing this I made it a point to discover something for which I could praise them, so as to bolster their deflated egos and to help satisfy that hunger and need of being wanted and loved.

Of course, we have to be careful not to overdo attention. One of the most important balances to be maintained is the balance between too much attention and too little. Each child requires individual study, for each has lived in a different environment and developed different tendencies. Before we can safely attempt to help, we must know not only the need but also the wisest way of filling it.

"That It May Be Well . . ."

From page 2

ade has seen a new interest in family worship. Devotional calendars are being sold in tens of thousands of copies. A Lutheran devotional booklet was recently put out in a Lent edition of 400,000 copies; another family devotional booklet was printed in more than 2,000,000 copies each quarter during 1944. There are more family devotions

conducted today than ever before in American history. May the movement grow and become a permanent part of American life; it will do wonders to rehabilitate our homes and thus vastly facilitate all other types of rehabilitation.

The pastor will be happy to share his rich experiences with family devotions. While the chief purpose will be meditation and worship, it will certainly also result in strengthening the family ties. Nothing will sanctify home life as will effective family worship; it will bring love and joy and the peace of God which passeth all human understanding.

As to the manner of conducting family devotions, there is no set form. Sincerity and eagerness and willingness to make the very best of it are most important. Your pastor will be happy to suggest special devotional books which consider the age of your children.

1. Reading meaningfully from Holy Scriptures, at least at times in a modern translation, should be a part of the devotion. If the children can view a picture which portrays the Biblical story, while part of the meditation is being read, it will add interest. You may wish to have a brief discussion of a Scripture passage to apply it to problems confronting the family.

2. You may pray in unison the Lord's Prayer, although this is difficult for small children. Say the Creed, or the Ten Commandments, or a beautiful hymn, or Luther's morning or evening prayer.

3. You may well read a prayer from a devotional booklet or have a free prayer by the father or another member of the family, concluding with the blessing of the Triune God. You will want to pray for forgiveness, you will want to give praise and thanks to God for His manifold blessings, and you will have special petitions to bring to Him regarding your family or nation or church. Come, let us pray for our congregation, every branch of missions, our pastor and others in authority in our church, our teachers, our government, and the like. What a privilege it is to carry everything to God in prayer! Alfred Tennyson wrote in his *Passing of Arthur:*

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer

Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

4. Then you might well sing a hymn or two, or at least several stanzas; tell your children something about the history and special meaning of certain hymns. Learn to know and love again the hymnal of your church as did your fathers. In many Christian homes it will be possible to spend an additional hour or half hour several times a week, reading and discussing some interesting and valuable book or story with the children; both you and your family will enjoy it, and over a period of time this may well be of far-reaching, Christian, educational value.

The order indicated here is not important. Such a service of family worship can be held in fifteen or twenty minutes. *It can be done* in a large number of Christian families if their Christianity is a reality in their lives—and it will strengthen that reality. As a rule they will certainly not want to rush through this devotional period; effective family worship calls for time and considerable effort.

Family worship should count in a family's life, and in the lives of its members. Every effort should be made to introduce family worship into the homes of the parish; if some are already enjoying holding these daily appointments with God, they should be encouraged and helped to make the most of them. Every family needs the Lord's face to shine upon them and be gracious unto them, to bless and keep them, for time and eternity. Every leader and teacher and parent in the church wants it to "be well with our children always and forever."

As Grace Noll Crowell wrote in her own inimitable fashion:

"So long as there are homes to which men turn
At close of day—
So long as there are homes where children are,
Where women stay,
If love and loyalty and faith be found
Across these sills,
A stricken nation can recover from
Its greatest ills.

"So long as there are homes where fires burn,
And there is bread,
So long as there are homes where lamps are lit
And prayers are said,
Although a people falters through the dark
And nations grope,
With God Himself back of these little homes,
We still can hope."